

Message Text

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SUBJ: LITTLE CHANGE EMERGES FROM DMC INTERNAL ELECTION

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1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH YADIN AND SHINUI ARE EACH CLAIMING
VICTORY, THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE DMC'S INTERNAL ELECTION
CONVEY A PICTURE OF LITTLE CHANGE. WHETHER OR NOT ONE FAC-
TION HAS GAINED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE OTHERS, THE PARTY
SEEMS HEADED FOR A SPLIT. THE SHINUI FACTION CONTINUES
TO WANT THE DMC OUT OF THE COALITION. EVEN IF SHINUI WINS
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IN A DMC COUNCIL VOTE TO QUIT THE GOVERNMENT, YADIN AND A
MAJORITY OF DMC MKS ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN IN THE COALITION.
THE FIVE SHINUI MKS MAY WELL BOLT THE COALITION REGARDLESS
OF HOW THE COUNCIL VOTES. END SUMMARY

2. LAST NIGHT (JULY 26), FOUR WEEKS AFTER THE INITIAL
POLLING, THE DMC FINALLY ANNOUNCED THE RESULTS OF ITS

ELECTION OF A NEW COUNCIL, THE NAME THE PARTY GIVES ITS CENTRAL COMMITTEE. PART OF THE DELAY WAS DUE TO A COMPLICATED VOTING PROCEDURE; MOST OF IT, HOWEVER, RESULTED FROM IRREGULARITIES REQUIRING A SECOND POLLING IN JERUSALEM AND SEVERAL OTHER LOCALITIES. SINCE MANY OF THE SUCCESSFUL 120 CANDIDATES DID NOT PUBLICLY IDENTIFY THEIR AFFILIATION WITH ANY OF THE PARTY'S THREE MAIN FACTIONS, (OR GAVE CONTRADICTORY ASSURANCES OF THEIR AFFILIATIONS) THE PUBLISHED RESULTS DO NOT PROVIDE A CLEAR INDICATION OF THE PARTY'S NEW COMPLEXION.

3. AT ISSUE IN THE ELECTION WERE DEPUTY PM YADIN'S LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY AND THE QUESTION OF THE DMCS CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE COALITION. FRACTIOUS DEBATE OVER THESE ISSUES HAS PROGRESSIVELY UNDERMINED THE PARTY'S UNITY AND PURPOSE TO THE POINT WHERE ITS CONTINUED VIABILITY IS IN DOUBT. BOTH AGGRAVATING AND REFLECTING THE DMC'S MALAISE ARE ITS DECLINING FIGURES IN PUBLIC OPINION POLLS AND ITS PARALLEL LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP.

4. THESE COMPETING FACTIONS HAVE EMERGED AS EXPRESSIONS OF THE PARTY'S INTERNAL STRUGGLE: (1) THE YADIN GROUP, WHICH INCLUDES JUSTICE MINISTER TAMIR AND HIS EX-FREE CENTER PARTY CONTINGENT, AND SEVEN OR EIGHT MKS. ALLIED WITH YADIN-TAMIR, AT LEAST ON MOST ISSUES, IS THE ODED GROUP, AN ORGANIZATION OF PROGRESSIVE ACTIVISTS OF NORTH

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AFRICAN BACKGROUND, WHICH JOINED THE DMC EN MASSE SOON AFTER ITS FOUNDING. ITS ONE DMC MK IS MORDECHAI ELGRABLI. THE YADIN LOYALISTS BELIEVE THE DMC CAN BE MOST EFFECTIVE BY REMAINING IN THE COALITION GOVERNMENT. (2) THE SHINUI FACTION HEADED BY MK AMNON RUBINSTEIN, IT DEMANDS A CHANGE IN DMC LEADERSHIP AND IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE FROM THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION TO RUBINSTEIN, THE FACTION INCLUDES FOUR OTHER MKS. (3) A NEW GROUP HEADED BY TRANSPORT MINISTER AMIT. AMONG THIS FACTION'S LUMINERIES ARE MK DAVID GOLOMB AND GENERAL (RET) AHARON YAARIV, FORMER HEAD OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE. THEY WANT TO REPLACE YADIN AS PARTY HEAD WITH AMIT. THEIR CURRENT POSITION ON REMAINING IN THE COALITION IS IN FLUX. WHILE PREVIOUSLY FAVORING GIVING BEGIN MORE TIME FOR PROGRESS ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE WITHDRAWING FROM THE COALITION, THE AMIT FACTION HAD BECOME MORE RESTIVE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF ITS OPPOSITION TO THE GOI'S RESPONSE OF SEVERAL WEEKS AGO TO THE AMERICAN POSED QUESTIONS, AND BEGIN'S DISDAIN FOR THE KREISKY-BRANDT DECLARATION. HOWEVER, AMIT SUPPORTERS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN MOLLIFIED BY DAYAN'S KNESSET STATEMENT THIS WEEK THAT ISRAEL WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS AFTER FIVE YEARS THE WEST BANK'S SOVEREIGNTY.

5. BOTH YADIN-TAMIR AND SHINUI ARE CLAIMING VICTORY IN THE ELECTION, SUPPORTERS OF EACH CITING FIGURES THAT THE OTHER DISPUTES. A THIRD CALCULATION (UNOFFICIAL) WAS GIVEN TO THE PRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY'S ELECTION COMMITTEE. HE REPORTED THAT THE 135-MEMBER NEW COUNCIL (120 ELECTED MEMBERS PLUS THE DMC'S 15 MKS) WILL HAVE 41 EACH FOR THE YADIN-TAMIR GROUP AND SHINUI; 18 FOR ODED AND 22 FOR THE AMIT GROUP, WITH THE REST UNIDENTIFIED. BY ALL CALCULATIONS AMIT'S SHOWING FELL BELOW EXPECTATIONS. HOWEVER, HIS FACTION CONTINUES AS AN IMPORTANT SWING ELEMENT THAT COULD GIVE EITHER OF THE TWO MAJOR FACTIONS A CLEAR MAJORITY. THE ODED GROUP EMERGES AS A VITAL COMPONENT OF THE YADIN-TAMIR FACTION, BUT SINCE IT IS MORE ISSUE-ORIENTED THAN YADIN'S SUPPORTERS, WHOSE ONLY APPARENT TOUCHSTONE IS STAYING IN THE GOVERNMENT, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ODED'S CURRENT ALLIANCE WITH YADIN-TAMIR MAY HAVE AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE. AN ADDITIONAL ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY OF THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE PARTY IS THE FACT THAT THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE CUTS ACROSS FACTION LINES. SEVERAL DMC MKS WHO SUPPORT YADIN AND THE GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY ARE IN THE FOREFRONT OF OPPOSITION TO COALITION CONCESSIONS TO AGUDAT YISRAEL ON RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS.

6. TODAY'S CONFUSED PICTURE OF THE DMC SHOULD BECOME CLEARER WHEN THE NEW COUNCIL CONVENES IN TWO WEEKS TO ELECT A NEW CHAIRMAN. HOWEVER, DESPITE CONFLICTING CLAIMS, IT SEEMS SAFE TO SAY THAT THE ELECTION PRODUCED NO GREAT CHANGES IN THE PARTY'S INTERNAL BALANCE -- OR RATHER, DISHARMONY. EVEN IF SHINUI, RIGHT NOW HELL-BENT ON TAKING THE PARTY OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT, OBTAINS A MAJORITY OF COUNCIL VOTES, MOST OF THE DMC MKS LED BY YADIN AND TAMIR WOULD LIKELY IGNORE THE COUNCIL VOTE AND STAY IN THE COALITION, THUS ASSURING BEGIN OF A CONTINUING COMFORTABLE MAJORITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHETHER SHINUI WINS OR LOSES A VOTE IN THE COUNCIL ON LEAVING THE COALITION, THE FIVE SHINUI MKS MAY BOLT THE GOVERNMENT -- IF NOT IN COMPANY WITH THE ENTIRE DMC, THEN BY SPLITTING THE PARTY. LEWIS

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